



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: PIG

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW NAME FOR THE PIG?

- It's *khazir*, from the root חזר, which means "the eye became narrow."
- What kind of eyes do pigs have?
- What other English names do we have for pigs? (Swine, boar, and hog.)

IN THE ANCIENT WORLD OUR PEOPLE WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO BELIEVED IN THE ONE GOD AND FOLLOWED WHAT THE TORAH TAUGHT ABOUT DOING RIGHT AND WRONG.

- Very often our people were persecuted because they refused to worship idols or to give up the Torah.
- The pig was offered as a sacrifice and eaten by the people who lived in Canaan, which became the land of Israel, and they also sacrificed children to their gods.
- Why might it be forbidden to eat an animal that was used as part of idol worship and human sacrifice?
- You may remember in the Chanuka story that the Greek ruler Antiochus tried to force the Jews to eat pig so they would give up their beliefs and the Torah.

CAN ANYONE TEACH US WHY THE PIG ISN'T KOSHER?

- What are the two things that make an animal kosher? (Have a split hoof and bring up the cud.)
- Does anyone know what it means to bring up the cud?
- The pig has a split hoof but doesn't bring up the cud?
- But does anyone know why we are taught not to eat animals, like the pig, that don't have a split hoof and that don't chew the cud?
- Some people say it's for reasons of health—that the pig is a dirty animal.
- One of our greatest rabbis, Moses ben Maimon—he was also known as Maimonides and Rambam—who lived about 800 years ago, thought it was a matter of health.
- Incidentally, Maimonides was a doctor, so we shouldn't be surprised that he was concerned about health. (Guide for the Perplexed 3:48)
- But almost all of our rabbis have taught that it doesn't have anything to do with health.

THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF LAWS IN THE TORAH.

- Can anyone teach us what they are?
- One group of laws are called mishpatim: these are the kinds of laws that would have been made by people even if we hadn't been given the Torah, because they make sense to everyone—like the laws against murder and robbery.
- The other group of laws are called chukim, which are laws for which we don't have any apparent reason, like not eating pig or not mixing linen and wool in the same garment.
- Almost all of our rabbis have taught that the chukim, those laws for which we didn't have any apparent reason, were meant to make it clear to us and to other people that we were not like any other nation because we had a covenant or agreement with God.
- Can anyone teach us what that covenant is basically about?

SINCE THE PIG IS NOT KOSHER AND WE ARE TAUGHT NOT TO EAT IT, DO YOU THINK IT'S OKAY TO USE IT IN OTHER WAYS?

- For example, is there any Jewish reason why we shouldn't buy wallets or shoes that are made from pigskin?
- No, there is no reason, because the Torah only forbids eating pig—its skin and bristles may be used for other purposes.
- What if a person has no other food to eat but pig to stay alive?
 1. Do you think pig is kosher in that situation?
 2. No, it's still not kosher, but we are taught it may be eaten then, because saving a life is much more important than keeping kosher.

IT'S TIME FOR THE PIG QUIZ!

- In addition to their meat, what other products are derived from pigs? (Leather, soap, glue, edible fat, and hormones such as insulin that can be extracted from their glands.)
- How long ago did pigs begin to be raised by people—900, 9,000, or 90,000 years ago? (9,000)
- Which is probably smarter, a pig or a dog? (Probably the pig.)
- Are pigs herbivores (plant eaters), carnivores (meat eaters), or omnivores (eaters of both plants and meat)? (Omnivores.)
- How many breeds of pig exist in the world today? (About 90.)

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY TIMES IN THE PAST WHEN JEWS CHOSE TO DIE RATHER THAN GIVE UP THEIR BELIEFS AND EAT PIG.

- A man named Eleazar, who lived more than 2,000 years ago was in that situation.

- The Jews were being persecuted for their beliefs.
- Some of his friends urged him to eat some kosher meat and act as if it was pig, so he wouldn't be killed—but he refused.
- Why do you think he might chose to die rather than even look like he was eating pig?
- What he said was: It would be wrong to give people the idea that he was willing to give up his belief as a Jew to become a heathen who believed in many gods, worshipped idols, and didn't know right from wrong.
- What would have happened if everyone at that time had given up their beliefs as Jews? How would the world be different today?



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